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The Earth Breath and Other Poems

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HOMEWARD SONGS BY THE WAY

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The Earth Breath and Other Poems by A. E.

(by George W. Russell)

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To W. B. Peats

*I THOUGHT, beloved, to have brought to you
A gift of quietness and ease and peace,
Cooling your brow as with the mystic dew
Dropping from twilight trees.*

*Homeward I go not yet ; the darkness grows ;
Not mine the voice to still with peace divine :
From the first fount the stream of quiet flows
Through other hearts than mine.*

*Yet of my night I give to you the stars,
And of my sorrow here the sweetest gains,
And out of hell, beyond its iron bars,
My scorn of all its pains.*

The Earth Breath

FROM the cool and dark-lipped furrows
breathes a dim delight
Through the woodland's purple plumage
to the diamond night.
Aureoles of joy encircle
every blade of grass
Where the dew-fed creatures silent
and enraptured pass.
And the restless ploughman pauses,
turns and, wondering,
Deep beneath his rustic habit
finds himself a king ;
For a fiery moment looking
with the eyes of God
Over fields a slave at morning
bowed him to the sod.
Blind and dense with revelation
every moment flies,
And unto the mighty mother,
gay, eternal, rise
All the hopes we hold, the gladness,
dreams of things to be.
One of all thy generations,
mother, hails to thee.
Hail, and hail, and hail for ever,
though I turn again

The Earth Breath

From thy joy unto the human
 vestiture of pain.
I, thy child who went forth radiant
 in the golden prime,
Find thee still the mother-hearted
 through my night in time ;
Find in thee the old enchantment
 there behind the veil
Where the gods, my brothers, linger.
 hail, forever, hail !

Alter Ego

ALL the morn a spirit gay
Breathes within my heart a rhyme,
'Tis but hide and seek we play
In and out the courts of Time.

Fairy lover, when my feet
Through the tangled woodland go,
'Tis thy sunny fingers fleet
Fleck the fire dew to and fro.

In the moonlight grows a smile
Mid its rays of dusty pearl—
'Tis but hide and seek the while,
As some frolic boy and girl.

When I fade into the deep
Some mysterious radiance showers
From the jewel-heart of sleep
Through the veil of darkened hours.

Where the ring of twilight gleams
Round the sanctuary wrought,
Whispers haunt me—in my dreams
We are one yet know it not.

Some for beauty follow long
Flying traces ; some there be
Seek thee only for a song :
I to lose myself in thee.

A Vision of Beauty

WHERE we sat at dawn together, while the star-rich
 heavens shifted,
We were weaving dreams in silence, suddenly the veil
 was lifted.
By a hand of fire awakened, in a moment caught and led
Upward to the wondrous vision—through the star-mists
 overhead
Flare and flaunt the monstrous highlands; on the sap-
 phire coast of night
Fall the ghostly froth and fringes of the ocean of the
 light.
Many coloured shine the vapours: to the moon-eye far
 away
'Tis the fairy ring of twilight, mid the spheres of night
 and day,
Girdling with a rainbow cincture round the planet where
 we go,
We and it together fleeting, poised upon the pearly glow;
We and it and all together flashing through the starry
 spaces
In a tempest dream of beauty lighting up the place of
 places.
Half our eyes behold the glory; half within the spirit's
 glow
Echoes of the noiseless revels and the will of Beauty go.
By a hand of fire uplifted—to her star-strewn palace
 brought,

A Vision of Beauty

To the mystic heart of beauty and the secret of her
thought :

Here of yore the ancient mother in the fire mists sank to
rest,

And she built her dreams about her, rayed from out her
burning breast :

Here the wild will woke within her lighting up her
flying dreams,

Round and round the planets whirling break in woods
and flowers and streams,

And the winds are shaken from them as the leaves from
off the rose,

And the feet of earth go dancing in the way that beauty
goes,

And the souls of earth are kindled by the incense of her
breath

As her light alternate lures them through the gates of
birth and death.

O'er the fields of space together following her flying
traces,

In a radiant tumult thronging, suns and stars and myriad
races

Mount the spirit spires of beauty, reaching onward to the
day

When the shepherd of the Ages draws his misty hordes
away

A Vision of Beauty

Through the glimmering deeps to silence, and within the
awful fold

Life and joy and love forever vanish as a tale is told,
Lost within the mother's being. So the vision flamed
and fled,

And before the glory fallen every other dream lay dead.

The Voice of the Sea

THE sea was hoary, hoary,
Beating on rock and cave :
The winds were white and weeping
With foam dust of the wave.

They thundered louder, louder,
With storm-lips curled in scorn—
And dost thou tremble before us,
O fallen star of morn ?

Love

ERE I lose myself in the vastness and drowse myself
with the peace,
While I gaze on the light and the beauty afar from the
dim homes of men,
May I still feel the heart-pang and pity, love-ties that I
would not release ;
May the voices of sorrow appealing call me back to their
succour again.

Ere I storm with the tempest of power the thrones and
dominions of old,
Ere the ancient enchantment allure me to roam through
the star-misty skies,
I would go forth as one who has reaped well what harvest
the earth may unfold ;
May my heart be o'erbrimmed with compassion ; on my
brow be the crown of the wise.

I would go as the dove from the ark sent forth with
wishes and prayers
To return with the paradise blossoms that bloom in the
eden of light :
When the deep star-chant of the seraphs I hear in the
mystical airs,
May I capture one tone of their joy for the sad ones dis-
crowned in the night.

Love

Not alone, not alone would I go to my rest in the heart
of the love :

Were I tranced in the innermost beauty, the flame of its
tenderest breath,

I would still hear the plaint of the fallen recalling me
back from above,

To go down to the side of the mourners who weep in
the shadow of death.

The Mountaineer

OH, at the eagle's height
To lie i' the sweet of the sun,
While veil after veil takes flight
And God and the world are one.

Oh, the night on the steep!
All that his eyes saw dim
Grows light in the dusky deep,
And God is alone with him.

Dawn Song

WHILE the earth is dark and grey
How I laugh within. I know
In my breast what ardours gay
From the morning overflow.

Though the cheek be white and wet
In my heart no fear may fall :
There my chieftain leads and yet
Ancient battle trumpets call.

Bend on me no hasty frown
If my spirit slight your cares :
Sunlike still my joy looks down
Changing tears to beamy airs.

Think me not of fickle heart
If with joy my bosom swells
Though your ways from mine depart,
In the true are no farewells.

What I love in you I find
Everywhere. A friend I greet
In each flower and tree and wind—
Oh, but life is sweet, is sweet !

What to you are bolts and bars
Are to me the arms that guide
To the freedom of the stars,
Where my golden kinsmen bide.

Dawn Song

From my mountain top I view :
Twilight's purple flower is gone,
And I send my song to you
On the level light of dawn.

Immortality

WE must pass like smoke or live within the spirit's fire ;
For we can no more than smoke unto the flame return
If our thought has changed to dream, our will unto desire,
As smoke we vanish though the fire may burn.

Lights of infinite pity star the grey dusk of our days :
Surely here is soul : with it we have eternal breath :
In the fire of love we live, or pass by many ways,
By unnumbered ways of dream to death.

A Woman's Voice

HIS head within my bosom lay,
But yet his spirit slipped not through :
I only felt the burning clay
That withered for the cooling dew.

It was but pity when I spoke
And called him to my heart for rest,
And half a mother's love that woke
Feeling his head upon my breast :

And half the lion's tenderness
To shield her cubs from hurt or death,
Which, when the serried hunters press,
Makes terrible her wounded breath.

But when the lips I breathed upon
Asked for such love as equals claim—
I looked where all the stars were gone
Burned in the day's immortal flame.

‘Come thou like yon great dawn to me
From darkness vanquished, battles done :
Flame unto flame shall flow and be
Within thy heart and mine as one.’

Heroic Love

WHEN our glowing dreams were dead,
Ruined our heroic piles,
Something in your dark eyes said :
' Think no more of love or smiles.'

Something in me still would say,
' Though our dreamland palace goes,
I have seen how in decay
Still the wild rose clings and blows.'

But your dark eyes willed it thus :
' Build our lofty dream again :
Let our palace rise o'er us :
Love can never be till then.'

Benediction

NOW the roof-tree of the midnight spreading,
 Buds in citron, green, and blue :
From afar its mystic odours shedding,
 Child, on you.

Now the buried stars beneath the mountain
 And the vales their life renew,
Jetting rainbow blooms from tiny fountains,
 Child, for you.

In the diamond air the sun-star glowing,
 Up its feathered radiance threw ;
All the jewel glory there was flowing,
 Child, for you.

As within the quiet waters passing,
 Sun and moon and stars we view,
So the loveliness of life is glassing,
 Child, in you.

And the fire divine in all things burning
 Seeks the mystic heart anew,
From its wanderings far again returning,
 Child, to you.

The Memory of Earth

IN the wet dusk silver sweet,
Down the violet scented ways,
As I moved with quiet feet
I was met by mighty days.

On the hedge the hanging dew
Glassed the eve and stars and skies ;
While I gazed a madness grew
Into thundered battle cries.

Where the hawthorn glimmered white,
Flashed the spear and fell the stroke—
Ah, what faces pale and bright
Where the dazzling battle broke !

There a hero-hearted queen
With young beauty lit the van :
Gone ! the darkness flowed between
All the ancient wars of man.

While I paced the valley's gloom
Where the rabbits pattered near,
Shone a temple and a tomb
With the legend carven clear :

*'Time put by a myriad fates
That her day might dawn in glory ;
Death made wide a million gates
So to close her tragic story.'*

Dream Love

I DID not deem it half so sweet
To feel thy gentle hand,
As in a dream thy soul to greet
Across wide leagues of land,

Untouched more near to draw to you
Where, amid radiant skies,
Glimmered thy plumes of iris hue,
My Bird of Paradise.

Let me dream only with my heart,
Love first, and after see :
Know thy diviner counterpart
Before I kneel to thee.

So in thy motions all expressed
Thy angel I may view :
I shall not on thy beauty rest,
But Beauty's ray in you.

Morning

WE had the sense of twilight round us ;
The orange dawn lights fluttered by ;
And thrilling through the spell that bound us
We heard the world's awakening cry.

We felt the dim appeal of sorrow
Rolled outward from its quiet breath,
To waken to the burdened morrow,
The toil for life, the tears for death :

And out of all old pain and longing
The truer love woke with the light :
We saw the evil shadows thronging,
And went as warriors to the fight.

The Dream of the Children

THE children awoke in their dreaming
While earth lay dewy and still :
They followed the rill in its gleaming
To the heart-light of the hill.

Its sounds and sights were forsaking
The world as they faded in sleep,
When they heard a music breaking
Out from the heart-light deep.

It ran where the rill in its flowing
Under the star-light gay,
With wonderful colour was glowing
Like the bubbles they blew in their play.

From the misty mountain under
Shot gleams of an opal star ;
Its pathways of rainbow wonder
Rayed to their feet from afar.

From their feet as they strayed in the meadow
It led through caverned aisles,
Filled with purple and green light and shadow
For mystic miles on miles.

The children were glad : it was lonely
To play on the hillside by day.
' But now,' they said, ' we have only
To go where the good people stray.'

The Dream of the Children

For all the hillside was haunted
By the faery folk come again ;
And down in the heart-light enchanted
Were opal coloured men.

They moved like kings unattended
Without a squire or dame,
But they wore tiaras splendid
With feathers of starlight flame.

They laughed at the children over
And called them into the heart.
'Come down here, each sleepless rover ;
We will show you some of our art.'

And down through the cool of the mountain
The children sank at the call,
And stood in a blazing fountain
And never a mountain at all.

The lights were coming and going
In many a shining strand,
For the opal fire-kings were blowing
The darkness out of the land.

This golden breath was a madness
To set a poet on fire ;
And this was a cure for sadness,
And that the ease of desire.

The Dream of the Children

And all night long over Eri
They fought with the wand of light,
And love that never grew weary
The evil things of night.

They said as dawn glimmered hoary
‘We will show yourselves for an hour.’
And the children were changed to a glory
By the beautiful magic of power.

The fire-kings smiled on their faces
And called them by olden names,
Till they towered like the starry races
All plumed with the twilight flames.

They talked for a while together
How the toil of ages oppressed,
And of how they best could weather
The ship of the world to its rest.

The dawn in the room was straying :
The children began to blink,
When they heard a far voice saying
‘You can grow like that if you think.’

The sun came in yellow and gay light :
They tumbled out of the cot :
And half of the dream went with daylight
And half was never forgot.

Song

DUSK its ash-grey blossoms sheds on violet skies,
Over twilight mountains where the heart songs rise,
Rise and fall and fade away from earth to air.
Earth renews the music sweeter. Oh, come there.
Come, macushla, come, as in ancient times
Rings aloud the underland with faery chimes.
Down the unseen ways as strays each tinkling fleece
Winding ever onward to a fold of peace,
So my dreams go straying in a land more fair;
Half I tread the dew-wet grasses, half wander there.
Fade your glimmering eyes in a world grown cold;
Come, macushla, with me to the mountains old.
There the bright ones call us waving to and fro—
Come, my children, with me to the ancient go.

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

A DREAM

*I WOULD I could weave in
The colour, the wonder,
The song I conceive in
My heart while I ponder,*

*And show how it came like
The magi of old
Whose chant was a flame like
The dawn's voice of gold ;*

*Whose dreams followed near them
A murmur of birds,
And ear still could hear them
Unchanted in words.*

*In words I can only
Reveal thee my heart,
Oh, Light of the Lonely,
The shining impart.*

Between the twilight and the dark
The lights danced up before my eyes :
I found no sleep or peace or rest,
But dreams of stars and burning skies.

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

I knew the faces of the day—
Dream faces, pale, with cloudy hair,
I knew you not nor yet your home,
The Fount of Shadowy Beauty, where ?

I passed a dream of gloomy ways
Where ne'er did human feet intrude :
It was the border of a wood,
A dreadful forest solitude.

With wondrous red and fairy gold
The clouds were woven o'er the ocean ;
The stars in fiery æther swung
And danced with gay and glittering motion.

A fire leaped up within my heart
When first I saw the old sea shine ;
As if a god were there revealed
I bowed my head in awe divine ;

And long beside the dim sea marge
I mused until the gathering haze
Veiled from me where the silver tide
Ran in its thousand shadowy ways.

The black night dropped upon the sea :
The silent awe came down with it :

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

I saw fantastic vapours flee
As o'er the darkness of the pit.

When, lo ! from out the furthest night
A speck of rose and silver light
Above a boat shaped wondrously
Came floating swiftly o'er the sea.

It was no human will that bore
The boat so fleetly to the shore
Without a sail spread or an oar.

The Pilot stood erect thereon
And lifted up his ancient face,
Ancient with glad eternal youth
Like one who was of starry race.

His face was rich with dusky bloom ;
His eyes a bronze and golden fire ;
His hair in streams of silver light
Hung flamelike on his strange attire,

Which, starred with many a mystic sign,
Fell as o'er sunlit ruby glowing :
His light flew o'er the waves afar
In ruddy ripples on each bar
Along the spiral pathways flowing.

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

It was a crystal boat that chased
The light along the watery waste,
Till caught amid the surges hoary
The Pilot stayed its jewelled glory.

Oh, never such a glory was :
The pale moon shot it through and through
With light of lilac, white and blue :
And there mid many a fairy hue,
Of pearl and pink and amethyst,
Like lightning ran the rainbow gleams
And wove around a wonder-mist.

The Pilot lifted beckoning hands ;
Silent I went with deep amaze
To know why came this Beam of Light
So far along the ocean ways
Out of the vast and shadowy night.

‘ Make haste, make haste ! ’ he cried. ‘ Away !
A thousand ages now are gone.
Yet thou and I ere night be sped
Will reck no more of eve or dawn.’

Swift as the swallow to its nest
I leaped : my body dropt right down :
A silver star I rose and flew.

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

A flame burned golden at his breast :
I entered at the heart and knew
My Brother-Self who roams the deep,
Bird of the wonder-world of sleep.

The ruby vesture wrapped us round
As twain in one : we left behind
The league-long murmur of the shore
And fledted swifter than the wind.

The distance rushed upon the bark :
We neared unto the mystic isles :
The heavenly city we could mark,
Its mountain light, its jewel dark,
Its pinnacles and starry piles.

The glory brightened : ‘ Do not fear ;
For we are real, though what seems
So proudly built above the waves
Is but one mighty spirit’s dreams.

‘ Our Father’s house hath many fanes ;
Yet enter not and worship not,
For thought but follows after thought
Till last consuming self it wanes.

‘ The Fount of Shadowy Beauty flings
Its glamour o’er the light of day :

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

A music in the sunlight sings
To call the dreamy hearts away
Their mighty hopes to ease awhile :
We will not go the way of them :
The chant makes drowsy those who seek
The sceptre and the diadem.

‘The Fount of Shadowy Beauty throws
Its magic round us all the night ;
What things the heart would be, it sees
And chases them in endless flight.
Or coiled in phantom visions there
It builds within the halls of fire ;
Its dreams flash like the peacock’s wing
And glow with sun-hues of desire.
We will not follow in their ways
Nor heed the lure of fay or elf,
But in the ending of our days
Rest in the high Ancestral Self.’

The boat of crystal touched the shore,
Then melted flamelike from our eyes,
As in the twilight drops the sun
Withdrawing rays of paradise.

We hurried under archéd aisles
That far above in heaven withdrawn

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

With cloudy pillars stormed the night,
Rich as the opal shafts of dawn.

I would have lingered then—but he :
'Oh, let us haste : the dream grows dim,
Another night, another day,
A thousand years will part from him,

'Who is that Ancient One divine
From whom our phantom being born
Rolled with the wonder-light around
Had started in the fairy morn.

'A thousand of our years to him
Are but the night, are but the day,
Wherein he rests from cyclic toil
Or chants the song of starry sway.

'He falls asleep : the Shadowy Fount
Fills all our heart with dreams of light :
He wakes to ancient spheres, and we
Through iron ages mourn the night.
We will not wander in the night
But in a darkness more divine
Shall join the Father Light of Lights
And rule the long-descended line.'

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

Even then a vast twilight fell :
Wavered in air the shadowy towers :
The city like a gleaming shell,
Its azures, opals, silvers, blues,
Were melting in more dreamy hues.
We feared the falling of the night
And hurried more our headlong flight.
In one long line the towers went by ;
The trembling radiance dropt behind,
As when some swift and radiant one
Flits by and flings upon the wind
The rainbow tresses of the sun.

And then they vanished from our gaze
Faded the magic lights, and all
Into a starry radiance fell
As waters in their fountain fall.

We knew our time-long journey o'er
And knew the end of all desire,
And saw within the emerald glow
Our Father like the white sun-fire.

We could not say if age or youth
Was on his face : we only burned
To pass the gateways of the day,
The exiles to the heart returned.

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

He rose to greet us and his breath,
The tempest music of the spheres,
Dissolved the memory of earth,
The cyclic labour and our tears.
In him our dream of sorrow passed,
The spirit once again was free
And heard the song the morning stars
Chant in eternal revelry.

This was the close of human story ;
We saw the deep unmeasured shine,
And sank within the mystic glory
They called of old the Dark Divine.

*Well it is gone now,
The dream that I chanted :
On this side the dawn now
I sit fate-implanted.*

*But though of my dreaming
The dawn has bereft me,
It all was not seeming
For something has left me.*

*I feel in some other
World far from this cold light*

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty

*The Dream Bird, my brother,
Is rayed with the gold light.*

*I too in the Father
Would bide me, and so,
Bright Bird, to forgather
With thee now I go.*

Weariness

WHERE are now the dreams divine,
Fires that lit the dawning soul,
As the ruddy colours shine
Through an opal aureole ?

Moving in a joyous trance,
We were like the forest glooms
Rumorous of old romance,
Fraught with unimagined dooms.

Titans we or morning stars,
So we seemed in days of old,
Mingling in the giant wars
Fought afar in deeps of gold.

God, an elder brother dear,
Filled with kindly light our thought :
Many a radiant form was near
Whom our hearts remember not.

Would they know us now ? I think
Old companions of the prime
From our garments well might shrink,
Muddied with the lees of Time.

Fade the heaven-assailing moods :
Slave to petty tasks I pine
For the quiet of the woods,
And the sunlight seems divine.

Weariness

And I yearn to lay my head
Where the grass is green and sweet,
Mother, all the dreams are fled
From the tired child at thy feet.

Alien

DARK glowed the vales of amethyst
Beneath an opal shroud :
The moon bud opened through the mist
Its white-fire leaves of cloud.

Though rapt at gaze with eyes of light
Looked forth the seraph seers,
The vast and wandering dream of night
Rolled on above our tears.

Blindness

OUR true hearts are forever lonely :
A wistfulness is in our thought :
Our lights are like the dawns which only
Seem bright to us and yet are not.

Something you see in me I wis not :
Another heart in you I guess :
A stranger's lips—but thine I kiss not,
Erring in all my tenderness.

I sometimes think a mighty lover
Takes every burning kiss we give :
His lights are those which round us hover :
For him alone our lives we live.

Ah, sigh for us whose hearts unseeing
Point all their passionate love in vain,
And blinded in the joy of being,
Meet only when pain touches pain.

Janus

IMAGE of beauty, when I gaze on thee,
Trembling I waken to a mystery,
How through one door we go to life or death
By spirit kindled or the sensual breath.

Image of beauty, when my way I go ;
No single joy or sorrow do I know :
Elate for freedom leaps the starry power,
The life which passes mourns its wasted hour.

And, ah, to think how thin the veil that lies
Between the pain of hell and paradise !
Where the cool grass my aching head embowers
God sings the lovely carol of the flowers.

Illusion

WHAT is the love of shadowy lips
That know not what they seek or press,
From whom the lure for ever slips
And fails their phantom tenderness ?

The mystery and light of eyes
That near to mine grow dim and cold ;
They move afar in ancient skies
Mid flame and mystic darkness rolled.

O beauty, as thy heart o'erflows
In tender yielding unto me,
A vast desire awakes and grows
Unto forgetfulness of thee.

Awakening

THE lights shone down the street
In the long blue close of day :
A boy's heart beat sweet, sweet,
As it flowered in its dreamy clay.

Beyond the dazzling throng
And above the towers of men
The stars made him long, long,
To return to their light again.

They lit the wondrous years
And his heart within was gay ;
But a life of tears, tears,
He had won for himself that day.

The Dark Age

THE streets are spread with dross and slime ;
The black pools flash a steely light
To the chill stars : the iron time
Manacles us in night.

What cries of shadowy hosts in woe,
Who beat themselves against the bars
And suffer, why they do not know :
Lost children of the stars !

I will arise and look on Him
And tread the vast in dreams, and keep
The fire I hold from burning dim
Like theirs who moan in sleep.

The Man to the Angel

I HAVE wept a million tears :
Pure and proud one, where are thine,
What the gain though all thy years
In unbroken beauty shine ?

All your beauty cannot win
Truth we learn in pain and sighs :
You can never enter in
To the circle of the wise.

They are but the slaves of light
Who have never known the gloom,
And between the dark and bright
Willed in freedom their own doom.

Think not in your pureness there,
That our pain but follows sin :
There are fires for those who dare
Seek the throne of might to win.

Pure one, from your pride refrain :
Dark and lost amid the strife
I am myriad years of pain
Nearer to the fount of life.

When defiance fierce is thrown
At the God to whom you bow,
Rest the lips of the Unknown
Tenderest upon my brow.

The Garden of God

WITHIN the iron cities
One walked unknown for years,
In his heart the pity of pities
That grew for human tears.

When love and grief were ended
The flower of pity grew :
By unseen hands 't was tended
And fed with holy dew.

Though in his heart were barred in
The blooms of beauty blown,
Yet he who grew the garden
Could call no flower his own.

For by the hands that watered,
The blooms that opened fair
Through frost and pain were scattered
To sweeten the dead air.

The Hour of Twilight

WHEN the unquiet hours depart
And far away their tumults cease,
Within the twilight of the heart
We bathe in peace, are stilled with peace.

The fire that slew us through the day
For angry deed or sin of sense
Now is the star and homeward ray
To us who bow in penitence.

We kiss the lips of bygone pain
And find a secret sweet in them :
The thorns once dripped with shadowy rain
Are bright upon each diadem.

Ceases the old pathetic strife,
The struggle with the scarlet sin :
The mad enchanted laugh of life
Tempt not the soul that sees within.

No riotous and fairy song
Allures the prodigals who bow
Within the home of law, and throng
Before the mystic Father now,

Where faces of the elder years,
High souls absolved from grief and sin,
Leaning from out ancestral spheres
Beckon the wounded spirit in.

A New World

I WHO had sought afar from earth
The faery land to meet,
Now find content within its girth
And wonder nigh my feet.

To-day a nearer love I choose
And seek no distant sphere ;
For aureoled by faery dews
The dear brown breasts appear.

With rainbow radiance come and go
The airy breaths of day ;
And eve is all a pearly glow
With moonbow winds a-play.

The lips of twilight burn my brow,
The arms of night caress :
Glimmer her white eyes drooping now
With grave old tenderness.

I close mine eyes from dream to be
The Diamond-rayed again,
As in the ancient hours ere we
Forgot ourselves to men.

And all I thought of heaven before
I find in earth below :
A sunlight in the hidden core
To dim the noonday glow.

A New World

And with the earth my heart is glad,
I move as one of old ;
With mists of silver I am clad
And bright with burning gold.

Brotherhood

TWILIGHT, a blossom grey in shadowy valleys dwells:
Under the radiant dark the deep blue-tinted bells
In quietness reïmage heaven within their blooms,
Sapphire and gold and mystery. What strange perfumes,
Out of what deeps arising, all the flower-bells fling,
Unknowing the enchanted odorous song they sing!
Oh, never was an eve so living yet: the wood
Stirs not but breathes enraptured quietude.
Here in these shades the Ancient knows itself, the Soul,
And out of slumber waking starts unto the goal.
What bright companions nod and go along with it!
Out of the teeming dark what dusky creatures flit,
That through the long leagues of the island night above
Come by me, wandering, whispering, beseeching love;
As in the twilight children gather close and press
Nigh and more nigh with shadowy tenderness,
Feeling they know not what, with noiseless footsteps glide
Seeking familiar lips or hearts to dream beside.
O voices, I would go with you, with you, away,
Facing once more the radiant gateways of the day;
With you, with you, what memories arise, and nigh
Trampling the crowded figures of the dawn go by,
Dread deities, the giant powers that warred on men
Grow tender brothers and gay children once again;
Fades every hate away before the Mother's breast
Where all the exiles of the heart return to rest.

The Seer

OH, if my spirit may foretell
Or earlier impart,
It is because I always dwell
With morning in my heart.

I feel the keen embrace of light
Ere dawning on the view
It sprays the chilly fold of night
With iridescent dew.

The robe of dust around it cast
Hides not the earth below,
Its heart of ruby flame, the vast
Mysterious gloom and glow.

Something beneath yon coward gaze
Betrays the royal line ;
Its lust and hate, but errant rays,
Are at their root divine.

I hail the light of elder years
Behind the niggard mould,
The fiery kings, the seraph seers,
As in the age of gold.

And all about and through the gloom
Breaths from the golden clime
Are wafted like a sweet perfume
From some most ancient time.

A New Theme

I FAIN would leave the tender songs
I sang to you of old,
Thinking the oft-sung beauty wrongs
The magic never told.

And touch no more the thoughts, the moods,
That win the easy praise ;
But venture in the untrodden woods
To carve the future ways.

Though far or strange or cold appear
The shadowy things I tell,
Within the heart the hidden seer
Knows and remembers well.

I think that in the coming time
The hearts and hopes of men
The mountain tops of life shall climb,
The gods return again.

I strive to blow the magic horn ;
It feebly murmureth ;
Arise on some enchanted morn,
Poet, with God's own breath !

And sound the horn I cannot blow,
And by the secret name
Each exile of the heart will know
Kindle the magic flame.

Glory and Shadow

SHADOW

WHO art thou, O Glory,
In flame from the deep
Where stars chant their story ;
Why trouble my sleep ?
I hardly had rested ;
My dreams wither now.
Why comest thou crested
And gemmed on thy brow ?

GLORY

Up, Shadow, and follow
The way I shall show :
The blue gleaming hollow
To-night we will know :
And rise through the vast to
The fountain of days
From whence we had passed to
The parting of ways.

SHADOW

I know thee, O Glory ;
Thine eyes and thy brow
With white-fire all hoary
Come back to me now.
Together we wandered

Glory and Shadow

In ages ago :
Our thoughts as we pondered
Were stars at the dawn.
My glory has dwindled,
My azure and gold :
Yet you keep enkindled
The sunfire of old.
My footsteps are tied to
The heath and the stone :
My thoughts earth-allied-to,
Ah, leave me alone.
Go back, thou of gladness,
Nor wound me with pain,
Nor smite me with madness,
Nor come nigh again.

GLORY

Why tremble and weep now,
Whom stars once obeyed ?
Come forth to the deep now
And be not afraid.
The Dark One is calling
I know, for his dreams
Around me are falling
In musical streams.
A diamond is burning

Glory and Shadow

In depths of the Lone,
Thy spirit returning
May claim for its throne.
In flame-fringed islands
Its sorrow shall cease,
Absorbed in the silence
And quenched in the peace.
Come lay thy poor head on
My heart where it glows
With love ruby-red on
Thy heart for its woes.
My power I surrender ;
To thee it is due.
Come forth ! for the splendour
Is waiting for you.

The Free

A MEMORY

THEY bathed in the fire-flooded fountains :
Life girdled them round and about :
They slept in the clefts of the mountains :
The stars called them forth with a shout.

They prayed, but their worship was only
The wonder at nights and at days,
As still as the lips of the lonely
Though burning with dumbness of praise.

No sadness of earth ever captured
Their spirits who bowed at the shrine :
They fled to the Lonely enraptured
And hid in the darkness divine.

As children at twilight may gather,
They met at the doorway of death
The smile of the dark hidden Father,
The Mother with magical breath.

Untold of in song or in story,
In days long forgotten of men,
Their eyes were yet blind with a glory
Time will not remember again.

The Face of Faces

OVER all the dream built margin, flushed with
 grey and hoary light,
Glint the bubble planets tossing in the dead black
 sea of night.
Immemorial face, how many faces look from out
 thy skies,
Now with ghostly eyes of wonder rimmed around
 with rainbow dyes :
Now the secrets of the future trail along the
 silent spheres :
Ah, how often have I followed filled with phantom
 hopes and fears,
Where my star that rose dream-laden, moving to
 the mystic crown,
On the yellow moon-rock foundered and my joy
 and dreams went down.
As a child with hands uplifted peering through
 the cloudless miles
Bent the mighty mother o'er me shining all with
 eyes and smiles :
'Come up hither, child, my darling' : waving
 to the habitations,
Thrones, and starry kings around her, dark em-
 battled planet nations.
There the mighty rose in greeting, as their child
 from exile turning

The Face of Faces

Smiled upon the awful faces on the throne super-
nal burning.

As with sudden sweetness melting, shone the
eyes, the hearts of home,

Changed the vision, and the mother vanished in
the vasty dome.

So from marvel unto marvel turned the face I
gazed upon,

Till its fading majesty grew tender as a child
at dawn,

And the heaven of heavens departed and the
visions passed away

With the seraph of the darkness martyred in the
fires of day.

The Robing of the King

ON the bird of air blue-breasted glint the
 rays of gold,
And its shadowy fleece above us waves
 the forest old,
Far through rumorous leagues of mid-
 night stirred by breezes warm.
See the old ascetic yonder, ah, poor
 withered form,
Where he crouches wrinkled over by
 unnumbered years
Through the leaves the flakes of moon-fire
 fall like phantom tears.
At the dawn a kingly hunter swept in
 proud disdain,
Like a rainbow torrent scattered flashed
 his royal train.
Now the lonely one unheeded seeks earth's
 caverns dim :
Never king or prince will robe them
 radiantly as him
'Mid the deep enfolding darkness follow
 him, O seer,
Where the arrow will is piercing fiery
 sphere on sphere,
Through the blackness leaps and sparkles
 gold and amethyst,

The Robing of the King

Curling, jetting, and dissolving in a rain-
bow mist.
In the jewel glow and lunar radiance
rises there
One a morning star in beauty, young,
immortal, fair :
Sealed in heavy sleep, the spirit leaves its
faded dress,
Unto fiery youth returning out of
weariness.
Music as for one departing, joy as for a
king,
Sound and swell, and hark ! above him
cymbals triumphing.
Fire, an aureole encircling, suns his brow
with gold,
Like to one who hails the morning on the
mountains old.
Open mightier vistas, changing human
loves to scorns,
And the spears of glory pierce him like a
crown of thorns.
High and yet more high to freedom as a
bird he springs,
And the aureole outbreathing, gold and
silver wings

The Robing of the King

Plume the brow and crown the seraph :
soon his journey done

He will pass our eyes that follow, sped
beyond the sun.

None may know the darker radiance,
King, will there be thine,

Far beyond the light enfolded in the life
divine.

Winter

A DIAMOND glow of winter o'er the world :
Amid the chilly halo nigh the west
Flickers a phantom violet bloom unfurled
 Dim on the twilight's breast.

Only phantasmal blooms but for an hour,
A transient beauty ; then the white stars shine
Chilling the heart : I long for thee to flower,
 O bud of light divine.

But never visible to sense or thought
The flower of Beauty blooms afar withdrawn ;
If in our being then we know it not,
 Or, knowing, it is gone.

Answer

THE warmth of life is quenched with bitter frost ;
Upon the lonely road a child limps by
Skirting the frozen pools : our way is lost :
Our hearts sink utterly.

But from the snow-patched moorland chill and drear,
Lifting our eyes beyond the spirèd height,
With white-fire lips apart the dawn breathes clear
Its soundless hymn of light.

Out of the vast the voice of one replies
Whose words are clouds and stars and night and day,
When for the light the anguished spirit cries
Deep in its house of clay.

Duality

From me spring good and evil.

WHO gave thee such a ruby flaming heart
And such a pure cold spirit? Side by side
I know these must eternally abide
In intimate war, and each to each impart
Life from its pain, in every joy a dart
To wound with grief or death the self allied.
Red life within the spirit crucified,
The eyes eternal pity thee : thou art
Fated with deathless powers at war to be,
Not less the martyr of the world than he
Whose thorn-crowned brow usurps the due of tears
We would pay to thee, ever ruddy life,
Whose passionate peace is still to be at strife,
O'erthrown but in the unconflicting spheres.

Dibine Visitation

THE heavens lay hold on us : the starry rays
Fondle with flickering fingers brow and eyes :
A new enchantment lights the ancient skies.
What is it looks between us gaze on gaze ;
Does the wild spirit of the endless days
Chase through my heart some lure that ever flies ?
Only I know the vast within me cries
Finding in thee the ending of all ways.
Ah, but they vanish ; the immortal train
From thee, from me, depart, yet take from thee
Memorial grace : laden with adoration
Forth from this heart they flow that all in vain
Would stay the proud eternal powers that flee
After the chase in burning exultation.

The Christ-Sword

THE while my mad brain whirled around
She only looked with eyes elate
Immortal love at me. I found
How deep the glance of love can wound,
How cruel pity is to hate.

I was begirt with hostile spears :
My angel warred in me for you
Whose gentle calmness all too fierce
Made unseen lightnings to pierce
My heart that dripped with ruddy dew.

I know how on the final day
The hosts of darkness meet with death :
The angels with their love shall slay,
Flowing to meet the dark array
With terrible yet tender breath.

The Message of John

AN INTERPRETATION

[*St John i. 1-33.*]

*IN the mighty Mother's bosom was the Wise
With the mystic Father in æonian night ;
Aye, for ever one with them though it arise
Going forth to sound its hymn of light.*

*At its incantation rose the starry fane ;
At its magic thronged the myriad race of men ;
Life awoke that in the womb so long had lain
To its cyclic labours once again.*

*'Tis the soul of fire within the heart of life ;
From its fiery fountain spring the will and thought ;
All the strength of man for deeds of love or strife,
Though the darkness comprehend it not.*

In the mystery written here
John is but the life, the seer ;
Outcast from the life of light,
Inly with reverted sight
Still he scans with eager eyes
The celestial mysteries.
Poet of all far-seen things
At his word the soul has wings,
Revelations, symbols, dreams
Of the inmost light which gleams.

The Message of John

The winds, the stars, and the skies though wrought
By the one Fire-Self still know it not ;
And man who moves in the twilight dim
Feels not the love that encircles him,
Though in heart, on bosom, and eyelids press
Lips of an infinite tenderness,
He turns away through the dark to roam
Nor heeds the fire in his hearth and home.

They whose wisdom everywhere
Sees as through a crystal air
The lamp by which the world is lit,
And themselves as one with it ;
In whom the eye of vision swells,
Who have in entranced hours
Caught the word whose might compels
All the elemental powers ;
They arise as Gods from men
Like the morning stars again.
They who seek the place of rest
Quench the blood-heat of the breast,
Grow ascetic, inward turning
Trample down the lust from burning,
Silence in the self the will
For a power diviner still ;
To the fire-born Self alone
The ancestral spheres are known.

The Message of John

Unto the poor dead shadows came
Wisdom mantled about with flame ;
We had eyes that could see the light
Born of the mystic Father's might,
Glory radiant with powers untold
And the breath of God around it rolled.
Life that moved in the deeps below
Felt the fire in its bosom glow ;

Life awoke with the Light allied,
Grew divinely stirred, and cried :
'This is the Ancient of Days within,
Light that is ere our days begin.

'Every power in the spirit's ken
Springs anew in our lives again.
We had but dreams of the heart's desire
Beauty thrilled with the mystic fire.
The white-fire breath whence springs the power
Flows alone in the spirit's hour.'

Man arose from the earth he trod,
Grew divine as he gazed on God :
Light in a fiery whirlwind broke
Out of the dark divine and spoke :
Man went forth through the vast to tread
By the spirit of wisdom charioted.

The Message of John

There came the learned of the schools
Who measure heavenly things by rules,
The sceptic, doubter, the logician,
Who in all sacred things precisian,
Would mark the limit, fix the scope,
'Art thou the Christ for whom we hope ?
Art thou a magian, or in thee
Has the divine eye power to see ?'
He answered low to those who came,
'Not this, nor this, nor this I claim.
More than the yearning of the heart
I have no wisdom to impart.
I am the voice that cries in him
Whose heart is dead, whose eyes are dim,
"Make pure the paths where through may run
The light-streams from that golden one,
The Self who lives within the sun,"
As spake the seer of ancient days.'
The voices from the earthly ways
Questioned him still : 'What dost thou here,
If neither prophet, king nor seer ?
What power is kindled by thy might ?'
'I flow before the feet of Light ;
I am the purifying stream.
But One of whom ye have no dream,
Whose footsteps move among you still,
Though dark, divine, invisible.

The Message of John

Impelled by Him, before His ways
I journey, though I dare not raise
Even from the ground these eyes so dim
Or look upon the feet of Him.'

When the dead or dreamy hours
Like a mantle fall away.
Wakes the eye of gnostic powers
To the light of hidden day,

And the yearning heart within
Seeks the true, the only friend,
He who burdened with our sin
Loves and loves unto the end.

Ah, the martyr of the world,
With a face of steadfast peace
Round whose brow the light is curled
'Tis the Lamb with golden fleece,

So they called of old the shining.
Such a face the sons of men
See, and all its life divining
Wake primeval fires again.

Such a face and such a glory
Passed before the eyes of John,

The Message of John

With a breath of olden story
Blown from ages long ago.

Who would know the God in man,
Deeper still must be his glance,
Veil on veil his eye must scan
For the mystic signs which tell
If the fire electric fell
On the seer in his trance ;
As his way he upward wings
From all time-encircled things,
Flames the glory round his head
Like a bird with wings outspread
Gold and silver plumes at rest ;
Such a shadowy shining crest,
Round the hero's head reveals him
To the soul that would adore,
As the master-power that heals him
And the fount of secret lore.
Nature such a diadem
Places on her royal line,
Every eye that looks on them
Knows the Sons of the Divine

The Hour of the King

WHO would think this quiet breather
From the world had taken flight?
Yet within the form we see there
Wakes the golden King to-night.

Out upon the face of faces
He looked forth before his sleep:
Now he knows the starry races
Haunters of the ancient deep.

On the Bird of Diamond Glory
Floats in mystic floods of song:
As he lists Time's triple story
Seems but as a day is long.

From the mightier Adam falling
To his image dwarfed in clay,
He will at our voices calling
Come to this side of the day.

When he wakes, the dreamy-hearted,
He will know not whence he came,
And the light from which he parted
Be the seraph's sword of flame,

And behind it hosts supernal
Guarding the lost paradise,
And the tree of life eternal
From the weeping human eyes.

A Leader

THOUGH your eyes with tears were blind,
Pain upon the path you trod :
Well we knew, the hosts behind,
Voice and shining of a god.

For your darkness was our day,
Signal fires, your pains untold
Lit us on our wandering way
To the mystic heart of gold.

Naught we knew of the high land,
Beauty burning in its spheres ;
Sorrow we could understand
And the mystery told in tears.

A Last Counsel

COULD you not in silence borrow
Strength to go from us ungrieving ?
All these hours of loving sorrow
Only make more bitter leaving.

You will go forth lonely, thinking
Of the pain you leave behind you ;
From the golden sunlight shrinking
For the earthly tears will blind you.

Better, ah, if now we parted
For the little while remaining ;
You would seek when broken-hearted
For the mighty heart's sustaining.

You would go then gladly turning
From our place of wounds and weeping,
With your soul for comfort burning
To the mother-bosom creeping

Endurance

HE bent above : so still her breath
What air she breathed he could not say,
Whether in worlds of life or death :
So softly ebb'd away, away,
The life that had been light to him,
So fled her beauty leaving dim
The emptying chambers of his heart
Thrilled only by the pang and smart,
The dull and throbbing agony
That suffers still, yet knows not why.
Love's immortality so blind
Dreams that all things with it conjoined
Must share with it immortal day :
But not of this—but not of this—
The touch, the eyes, the laugh, the kiss,
Fall from it and it goes its way.
So blind he wept above her clay,
'I did not think that you could die.
Only some veil would cover you
Our loving eyes could still pierce through ;
And see through dusky shadows still
Move as of old your wild sweet will,
Impatient every heart to win
And flash its heavenly radiance in.'
Though all the worlds were sunk in rest
The ruddy star within his breast

Endurance

Would croon its tale of ancient pain,
Its sorrow that would never wane,
The memory of the days of yore
Moulded in beauty evermore.
Ah, immortality so blind,
To dream all things with it conjoined
Must follow it from star to star
And share with it immortal years.
The memory, yearning, grief, and tears,
Fall from it and it goes afar.
He walked at night along the sands,
He saw the stars dance overhead,
He had no memory of the dead,
But lifted up exultant hands
To hail the future like a boy,
The myriad paths his feet might press.
Unhaunted by old tenderness
He felt an inner secret joy—
A spirit of unfettered will
Through light and darkness moving still
Within the All to find its own,
To be immortal and alone.

The Mid-World

THIS is the red, red region
Your heart must journey through :
Your pains will here be legion
And joy be death for you.

Rejoice to-day : to-morrow
A turning tide shall flow
Through infinite tones of sorrow
To reach an equal woe.

You pass by love unheeding
To gain the goal you long—
But my heart, my heart is bleeding :
I cannot sing this song.

The Tide of Sorrow

ON the twilight-burnished hills I lie and long and gaze
Where below the grey-lipped sands drink in the flowing
 tides,
Drink, and fade and disappear : interpreting their ways
 A seer in my heart abides.

Once the diamond dancing day-waves laved thy thirsty
 lips :
Now they drink the dusky night-tide running cold and
 fleet,
Drink, and as the chilly brilliance o'er their pallor slips
 They fade in the touch they meet.

Wave on wave of pain where leaped of old the billowy
 joys :
Hush and still thee now unmoved to drink the bitter sea,
Drink with equal heart : be brave ; and life with laugh-
 ing voice
And death will be one for thee.

Ere my mortal days pass by and life in the world be done,
Oh, to know what world shall rise within the spirit's ken
When it grows into the peace where light and dark are
 one !
What voice for the world of men ?

Tragedy

A MAN went forth one day at eve :
The long day's toil for him was done :
The eye that scanned the page could leave
Its task until to-morrow's sun.

Upon the threshold where he stood
Flared on his tired eyes the sight,
Where host on host the multitude
Burned fiercely in the dusky night.

The starry lights at play—at play—
The giant children of the blue,
Heaped scorn upon his trembling clay
And with their laughter pierced him through.

They seemed to say in scorn of him
'The power we have was once in thee.
King, is thy spirit grown so dim,
That thou art slave and we are free?'

As out of him the power—the power —
The free—the fearless, whirled in play,
He knew himself that bitter hour
The close of all his royal day.

And from the stars' exultant dance
Within the fiery furnace glow,
Exile of all the vast expanse,
He turned him homeward sick and slow.

In the Womb

STILL rests the heavy share on the dark soil :
Upon the black mould thick the dew-damp lies :
The horse waits patient : from his lowly toil
The ploughboy to the morning lifts his eyes.

The unbudding hedgerows dark against day's fires
Glitter with gold-lit crystals : on the rim
Over the unregarding city's spires
The lonely beauty shines alone for him.

And day by day the dawn or dark enfolds
And feeds with beauty eyes that cannot see
How in her womb the mighty mother moulds
The infant spirit for eternity.

Star Teachers

EVEN as a bird sprays many-coloured fires,
The plumes of paradise, the dying light
Rays through the fevered air in misty spires
That vanish in the height,

Vanish beyond the stars and further dreams,
The heaven of heavens. Here in my thought the
dome
Flashes about me with familiar gleams
Of birthplace and of home.

These myriad eyes that look on me are mine ;
Wandering beneath them I have found again
The ancient ample moment, the divine,
The God-root within men.

For this, for this the lights innumerable
As symbols shine that we the true light win :
For every star and every deep they fill
Are stars and deeps within.

Heroes and gods beneath them come and go :
Still the heroic, the divine, remain
Breathing from these the strength that quiets woe,
With beauty crowning pain.

On a Hillside

A FRIENDLY mountain I know ;
As I lie on the green slope there
It sets my heart in a glow
And closes the door on care.

A thought I try to frame—
I was with you long ago ;
My soul from your heart out-came ;
Mountain, is that not so ?

Take me again, dear hills,
Open the door to me
Where the magic murmur thrills
The halls I do not see,

Thy halls and caverns deep ;
Though sometimes I may dare
Down the twilight stairs of sleep
To meet the kingly there.

Sometimes on flaming wings
I sit upon a throne
And watch how the great star swings
Along the sapphire zone.

It has wings of its own for flight,
Diamond its pinions strong,
Glories of opal and white,
I watch the whole night long.

On a Hillside

Until I needs must lay
My royal robes aside
To toil in a world of grey,
Grey shadows by my side.

And when I ponder it o'er
Grey memories only bide,
But their fading lips tell more
Than all the world beside.

A Return

WE turned back mad from the mystic mountains,
All foamed with red and with elfin gold :
Up from the heart of the twilight's fountains
The fires enchanted were starward rolled.

We turned back mad : we thought of the morrow,
The iron clang of the far-away town :
We could not weep in our bitter sorrow,
But joy as an Arctic sun went down.

Content

WHO are exiles ? As for me
Where beneath the diamond dome
Lies the light on hill or tree,
There my palace is and home.

Who are lonely lacking care ?
Here the winds are living, press
Close on bosom, lips and hair—
Well I know their soft caress.

Sad or fain no more to live ?
I have pressed the lips of pain ;
With the kisses lovers give,
Ransomed ancient joys again.

Captive ? See what stars give light
In the hidden heart of clay :
At their radiance dark and bright
Fades the dreamy king of day.

Night and day no more eclipse
Friendly eyes that on us shine,
Speech from old familiar lips
Playmates of a youth divine.

Brothers weary, come away ;
We will quench the heart's desire
Past the gateways of the day
In the rapture of the fire.

Epilogue

*WELL, when all is said and done
Best within my narrow way,
May some angel of the sun
Muse memorial o'er my clay :*

*' Here was beauty all betrayed
From the freedom of her state ;
From her human uses stayed
On an idle rhyme to wait.*

*Ah, what deep despair might move
If the beauty lit a smile,
Or the heart was warm with love
That was pondering the while.*

*He has built his monument
With the winds of time at strife,
Who could have before he went
Written on the book of life.*

*To the stars from which he came
Empty handed, he goes home ;
He who might have wrought in flame
Only traced upon the foam.'*

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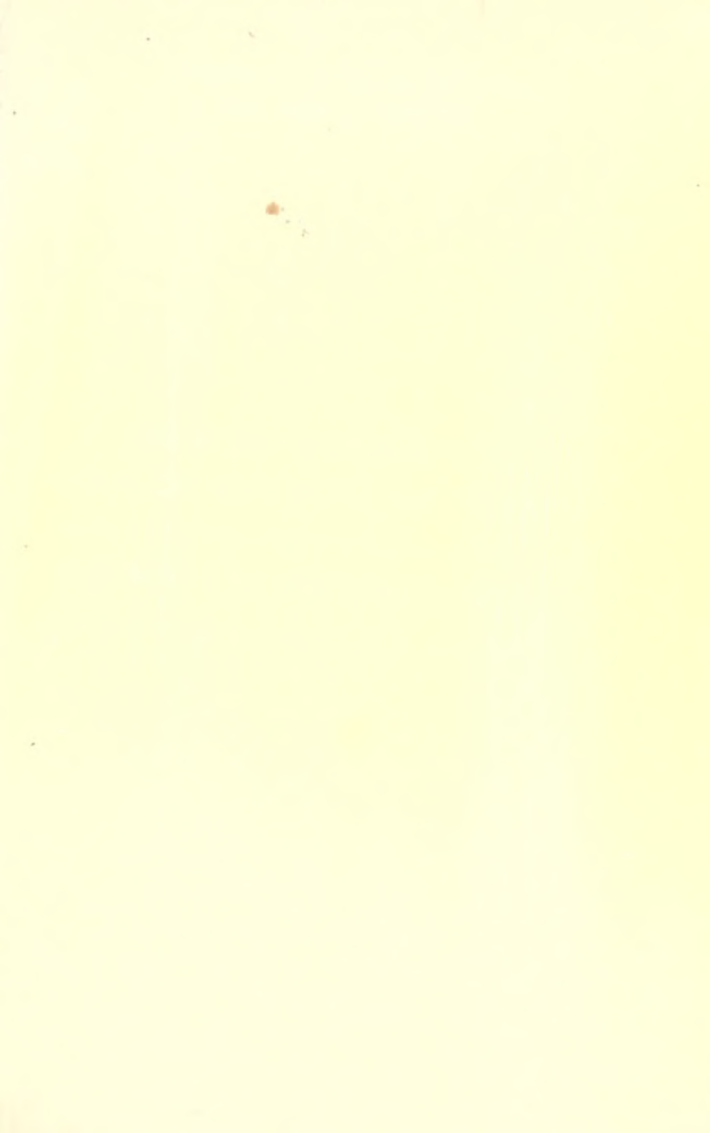
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